

# 1 TIMOTHY

## INTRODUCTION

The First Epistle to Timothy introduces us to a new set of epistles which were written by Paul. There are three of them that belong together (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), and they are called "The Pastoral Epistles," because they have to do with local churches. You will find that these pastoral epistles are in contrast, for instance, to the Epistle to the Ephesians. There Paul speaks of the church as the body of believers who are in Christ and the glorious, wonderful position that the church has. The church which is invisible, made up of all believers who are in the body of Christ, manifests itself down here upon the earth in local assemblies, in the local churches.

Now, just to put a steeple on a building and a bell in the steeple and a pulpit down front and a choir in the loft singing the doxology doesn't mean it is a local church in the New Testament sense of the word. There must be certain identifying features. I have written a booklet called *The Spiritual Fingerprints of the Visible Church*, in which I point out that a local church must manifest itself in a certain way in order to meet the requirements of a church of the Lord Jesus.

These three epistles were written to two young preachers who worked with Paul: Timothy and Titus. They were a part of his fruit; that is, they were led to Christ through the ministry of Paul. He had these men with him as helpers, and he instructed them about the local church.

In all three epistles Paul is dealing with two things: the creed of the church and the conduct of the church. For the church within, the worship must be right. For the church outside, good works must be manifested. Worship is inside; works are outside. That's the way the church is to manifest itself.

Paul deals with these two topics in each of the three epistles. For instance, in 1 Timothy, chapter 1, is faith, the faith of the church -- its doctrine. In chapter 2 is the order of the church. Chapter 3 concerns the officers of the church. Chapter 4 describes the apostasy that was coming, and chapters 5 and 6 tell of the duties of the officers.

In 2 Timothy, Paul deals with the afflictions of the church in chapter 1 and the activity of the church in chapter 2. Then the apostasy of the church and the allegiance of the church follow in chapters 3 and 4.

Titus has the same theme. Chapter 1 tells of the order of the church, chapter 2 is about the doctrine of the church, and in chapter 3 is the good works of the church.

So there is creed on the inside of the church and conduct on the outside. Within is worship and without are good works.

The church today manifests itself in a local assembly. It first puts up a building. In Paul's day, they didn't have a building. That's one thing they didn't need because they were not building churches. They generally met in homes and probably in public buildings. We know in Ephesus that Paul used -- probably rented -- the school of Tyrannus. I suppose

Paul used the auditorium during the siesta time each day. People came in from everywhere to hear him preach. That could be characterized as a local assembly, and it became a local church in Ephesus.

In order to be a local assembly, the church must have certain things to characterize it. It must have a creed, and its doctrine must be accurate. There are two verses that summarize Paul's message in these epistles: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other [different] doctrine" ([1Tim. 1:3](#)). It is important that a church have correct doctrine. That's what I mean when I say that a steeple on a building doesn't make it a local church by any means. Then again Paul said to this young preacher: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" ([1Tim. 3:15](#)). The local church is made up of believers who are members of the body of Christ. In order for them to function, they need leadership. Somebody has to be appointed to sweep the place out and somebody to build a fire in the stove -- if they have one.

In the first little church that I served, I swept the church out sometimes, and on Sunday morning, because it was a little country church, the first one who got there built a fire in the stove. I always tried to be a little late, but I'd say that half the time I built the fire. Those things are essential. Also it's nice to have a choir and a song leader. In addition to this, Paul is going to say that officers are essential for a church to be orderly. There must be officers, and they must meet certain requirements. The church should function in an orderly manner and manifest itself in the community by its good works. Unfortunately today that is idealistic in most places because the local church doesn't always manifest what it should.

From these Pastoral Epistles have come three different types of church government which have been used by the great denominations of the church. The churches never disagreed on doctrine in the old days as much as they disagreed on this matter of church government, that is, how the local church is to function. I marvel that they could get three different forms of government out of these three Pastoral Epistles, but they did.

1. There is the episcopal form of government where there is one man, or maybe several men, who are in charge at the top. The Roman Catholic church calls that man a pope. In other churches he is called the archbishop; if there are several leaders, they are called bishops. The Church of England and other churches follow the episcopal form of government. They are controlled by men at the top who are outside the local church.
2. Another form of church government is known as the presbyterian or representative form of government. The local church elects certain men from its membership, called elders and deacons, to be officers, and the government of the local church is in their hands. Unfortunately, the churches were bound together by an organization above the level of the local church, and that organization could control the local church.
3. The third type of church government is the opposite extreme from the episcopal form, called the congregational form of government. You see it, of course, in the Congregational and Baptist churches. The people are the ones who make the decisions

and who are actually in control. The entire church votes on taking in members and on everything else that concerns the local church.

Perhaps you are wondering how they could get three forms of church government from the same words in the Pastoral Epistles. Well, of course, certain words were interpreted differently. I'll try to call attention to these various interpretations as we go through the Pastoral Epistles.

The very interesting thing is that in the early days all three forms of church government functioned and seemed to work well. But in recent years all three forms of government have fallen on evil days; they don't seem to work as they once did. Men who are members of all three forms of government tell me that there is internal strife and disorder and dissension. What is wrong? Immediately somebody says, "Well, the system is wrong."

This is an interesting question since we have a representative form of civil government in this country. It was patterned after the church government. You see, the early colonists didn't want a king. That was the only form of government they had known, and they had had enough of a king. They did not want an autocratic form of government, and they were rather reluctant to let the people rule. That may seem strange to you when you listen to local politicians today who talk about "everybody having a vote." In colonial times women didn't vote; men who were not landowners did not vote. Only those who had property and belonged to a certain elite class voted.

The reason the colonists did not want a king to rule over them was because they couldn't trust human nature, which means they couldn't trust each other. We think of those men as being wonderful, political patriotic saints. Well, they were human beings and filled with foibles. They knew they couldn't trust each other, so they would not put power in the hands of one man. They were also afraid to put power in the people's hands because they had no confidence in the people either.

That contradicts the concept that the politician purports when he says that the majority can't be wrong -- or "The voice of the people is the voice of God." Frankly, that's just not true.

Why is it, then, that our forms of church government are not working as they should? Well, I want to say -- and I hope I'm not misunderstood, because I recognize my inability to express it in the way I'd like to express it to you -- that I believe Paul is saying in this epistle that the form of government, important as it is, is not as important as the caliber and character of the men who are holding office.

These epistles outline certain requirements for officers, such as being sober, having one wife, etc. These requirements are essential and are the subjects of debate in the local churches. But here is something more important that I have never heard argued in my forty long years as a pastor, and that is the most basic requirement for officers. Paul is trying to convey to us that the men who are officers must be spiritual, because no system will function unless the men who are in the place and position of authority are right. If they are wrong, no system -- whether it is congregational or episcopal or presbyterian -- will work.

That, my friend, is the problem. It is the problem today in politics, and it is the problem today in the church. When we elect a man, he must be successful in his vocation and he should have leadership ability. I think those are good requirements, but we need to determine if he is a spiritual man.

Paul is going to emphasize two aspects of the spiritual officer: he must be a man of faith, and he must be motivated by love. Unless those two characteristics are operating in his life, the officer can't function in the church no matter how much ability he has.

What this simply means is that the authority the officers have is actually no authority at all. Paul says that when you've been made an elder or a bishop or a deacon in the church, you have an office and you may feel very pompous and authoritative, but Paul says you really have no authority. Well, what does he mean? He means that Christ is the Head of the church, and the Holy Spirit is the One to give the leading and the guiding and the direction. The officer is never to assert his will in anything; he is to find out what the will of God is. That means he will have to be a man of faith.

He also will have to be motivated by love. Now that doesn't mean that he is to go around soft-soaping everybody and scratching their backs, trying to be a man-pleaser, but he is to carry through the will of Christ in that church. It is his job to make sure that Christ is the Head of the church. Oh, how I've spent weary hours in board meetings talking about some little thing that had absolutely nothing to do with the spiritual welfare of the church, but had a lot to do with the will of some hardheaded, stubborn officer who thought he was a spiritual man. Such a man had no idea that he was to carry through the will of Christ because, to begin with, he had never sought the will of Christ. All he was attempting to do was to serve his own will because he thought his will was right.

Oh, my friend, Christ is the Head of the local church today. We see this is the very first verse where Paul calls Him "the Lord Jesus Christ." He is the Lord, and, remember, that means He is Number One. The Lord Jesus said in His day, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" ([Luke 6:46](#)). A lot of people call Him "Lord" today in the church, and they're not following Him at all. To be an officer in the church means that you're to carry through the will of Christ, His commandments, and His desires. He is the Head of the local church. That is what is needed today, is it not?

Therefore, I am not prepared to argue with anybody about the form of government in his church. If you think yours is the best form, fine! You go along with it. But it will work only if you have the right men. It won't work -- no matter what the form is -- if you have the wrong men. The unspiritual officer is the monkey wrench in the machinery of the church today. Although it is the business of the church to get Him through to the world, that is the reason we don't see much evidence of Christ.

In 1 Timothy, then, we deal with the nitty-gritty of the local church, with the emphasis that it is the character and caliber of her leaders that will determine whether the church is really a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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# **Chapter 1**

**THEME:** The faith of the church

Paul's emphasis here will not be a doctrinal statement of the Christian church, but a warning against false teachers in the local church. He will stress that the gospel of the grace of God is central in doctrine and concerns the person of Christ.

## **Introduction (1:1-2)**

The introduction to 1 Timothy is unlike any other in Paul's epistles. Perhaps you had come to the conclusion that they were all the same, but the introductions to the Pastoral Epistles are a little different. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent has said that the salutation in 1 Timothy as a whole has no parallel in Paul.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord [[1Tim. 1:1-2](#)].

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God." Paul asserts his apostleship to Timothy, and he has certainly done so before. In Ephesians he says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God . . ." ([Eph. 1:1](#), italics mine). Now what is the difference between the commandment and the will of God? The will of God and the

commandment of God are the same, yet they are not exactly synonymous. All the commandments which you will find in the Bible reveal the will of God. This would include much more than the Ten Commandments. For example, we are told that it is the will of God that we pray: "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" ([1Thess. 5:17-18](#)). There are many things which are the will of God, and they are expressed in His commandments. However, I do not think that we have revealed to us all of the will of God, even in the sum total of the commandments in Scripture. The will of God is therefore a much broader term than the commandment of God.

Remember, however, that we have revealed to us enough of the will of God to know that man is not saved by obedience to the commandments of God. This is important to reiterate as there are so many today who say the Law is essential to our salvation.

In [verse 8](#) of this chapter, Paul writes, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." How are we to use the Law? First, we need to see that the Law is good: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" ([Rom. 7:12](#)). It is the very fact that the Law is good and demands absolute goodness from man (in whom there is no good thing) that the sinner cannot obey it. Paul says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing . . ." ([Rom. 7:18](#)). The Law or the commandments of God were given to reveal the will of God and to show that in order for a sinner to be saved it is necessary to find a way other than obedience to a perfect law; to understand this is to use the law "lawfully."

The glory of the gospel is that God found a way that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In Acts Paul preached: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [that is, the Lord Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" ([Acts 13:38-39](#)). Why could they not be justified by the law of Moses? Because it was a ministration of death: the Law condemned them. The Law wasn't given to save us, but to reveal that God is holy and that you and I are not holy. The way that God found to save us is the way of the Cross, the way of the Lord Jesus. "I am the way," He says, "the truth, and the life" ([John 14:6](#)). The Law is not the way to God; Christ is the way.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians that he was an apostle by the will of God, that was true. But when he wrote to this young preacher Timothy, he said, "I am an apostle by the commandment of God. He made me an apostle. It is not just because I am in the will of God today that I am an apostle. There was a time when He commanded me to be an apostle." I think Paul might have been rather reluctant to become an apostle. I'm sure he could have offered excuses to the Lord as Moses did. He hadn't been with the Lord as the other eleven apostles had been. He never knew Him in the days of His flesh; he knew Him only as the glorified Christ. He said he was unworthy to be an apostle. But the Lord Jesus had said, "I command you," and that is the reason Paul could walk into a synagogue or go before a gainsaying audience in Athens, or a group of rotten, corrupt sinners in Corinth, and boldly declare the gospel. He was a soldier under orders, an apostle by commandment -- not by commission, but by commandment. No one laid hands on Paul to make him an apostle, but the Lord Jesus personally gave him the authority.

Jeremiah had this same kind of authority. He was a shrinking violet, a retiring sort of person, the man with a broken heart. Yet he stepped out and gave some of the strongest statements that ever came from God. Why could he do that? He was a soldier under orders -- under orders from God.

Any man who is going to speak for God today needs to do it with authority or he ought to keep quiet. A man who gets up in the pulpit and says, "If you believe in a fashion, I expect that maybe you'd be saved if you believe in a way on Jesus." Such a wishy-washy man has nothing to say for God at all. Paul was an apostle who spoke with the authority of God.

"God our Saviour" -- is God our Savior? He certainly is: ". . . God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." ([John 3:16](#)). God provided the sacrifice, and the Lord Jesus is the One who came to this earth and executed it.

"And the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." To say that Christ is our hope may seem strange to you, as it is not found often in Scripture. Actually, the only other time you will find it is in [Colossians 1:27](#): ". . . Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Lord Jesus died to save you. He lives to keep you saved. He is going to come someday to take you to be with Himself and to consummate that salvation. He is our faith when we look backwards; He is love when we look around us today; and He is our hope as we look ahead. But it is hope, actually, all the way through our lives, and that hope is anchored in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Timothy" -- sometimes he is called Timothy and sometimes Timotheus. Timotheus is made up of two Greek words which mean "that which is dear to God." Timothy was dear to God, he was dear to the apostle Paul, and he was dear to the local churches.

We read of Timothy in the Books of Acts, Ephesians, and Philippians. His father was a Greek. His grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, became Christians before him. He lived in Lystra where Paul was stoned. I feel that Paul was actually raised from the dead at that time, and this may have had a lot to do with the conversion of Timothy. As a young man he probably was rather skeptical, and this event may have helped convince him and bring him to conversion. After his conversion he became an avowed follower of Paul.

Timothy was a man who had a good reputation. We read of him in [Acts 16:2-5](#): "Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." As Timothy worked with Paul he became one in whom Paul had the utmost confidence, while others in the churches proved to be false brethren who deceived him.

It is the joy of every pastor to have wonderful friends in his church. I have lived and ministered in Pasadena, California since 1940. I meet people everywhere, some who



came to know the Lord as early as 1940 or 1941, who are still following in the Lord's steps, and they are loyal, faithful friends of mine. That is why we keep our ministry's headquarters here, for we have a host of wonderful, trusted friends in this area.

Paul had those whom he couldn't trust, but Timothy was one he could trust. He wrote in Philippians: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me" ([Phil. 2:19-23](#)).

"Timothy, my own son in the faith" could be translated as "my true son in the faith" or "my genuine son in the faith." Paul had led Timothy to the Lord, and they were very close.

"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." At first this may appear to be the same as the introductions to Paul's other epistles. Yes, Paul has used grace and peace before, but we have another word here, and that is mercy. Mercy is a word that was used in the Old Testament and was equivalent to the word grace. It was the Old Testament sacrifice that made the holy and righteous and just throne of God into a mercy seat.

When you and I come to God, we don't want justice, for we would be condemned. What we want and need from God is mercy. And God has provided mercy for all His creatures. He has all the mercy that you need. Yet His mercy is just like money in the bank which will do you no good unless you write a check, and the check you need to write is the check of faith. God is rich in mercy, but when He saves you, He saves you by His grace. God is merciful to you, and He is merciful to all sinners in the world, even those who blaspheme Him and repudiate Him and turn their back on Him. He sends rain on the just and the unjust -- He doesn't play favorites, even with His own people. Sinners today get rich and they prosper. They often seem to do better than God's own people. He is merciful to sinners. But when you come to God, you must come by faith -- write the check of faith -- and then God will save you by His grace.

These three words -- love, mercy, and grace -- are a little trinity. Love is that in God which existed before He could care to exercise mercy or grace. God is love; it is His nature, His attribute. Mercy is that in God which provided for the need of sinful man. Grace then is that in Him which acts freely to save because all the demands of His holiness have been satisfied. Therefore, because God is merciful, you can come to Him, and by His grace He'll save you. You don't have to bring anything, you cannot bring anything, because it would only be filthy rags to God.

A do-gooder is one who thinks he does not need the mercy of God, that his own good works will save him. I knew a man who, although he was on his deathbed, said to me, "Preacher, you don't need to tell me that I need Christ as a Savior and that I need the mercy and the grace of God. I don't need it: I'm willing to stand before Him just like I am." Then he went on to tell me all that he had done in his life. He had been deeply involved with the Community Chest and with an orphans' home and on and on. Oh, he



was a do-gooder, and he was going to stand before God on that! My friend, a do-good salvation will not do you any good when you really need it. The salvation God provides will enable you to do good, the kind of good which is acceptable to Him. The righteousness of man is filthy rags in His sight.

So we have found that Paul uses here (and throughout all of the Pastoral Epistles) expressions that we will not see elsewhere in his writings. He obviously spoke to these young preachers in an intimate and more personal way than he did in his public speaking or writing. Wouldn't you love to have been Timothy, to have traveled with Paul and have the great apostle open his mind and heart to you? Well, my friend, the Spirit of God is here and He is talking to us through this epistle which Paul wrote to Timothy.

Although 1 Timothy is intimate and personal, it has to do with the affairs of the local church, the body of believers as it manifests itself in the community. And I want to say here -- perhaps it reveals the pastor in me -- that every believer should be identified with some local church.

"God our Father" -- God is Paul's Father, He is Timothy's Father, and He is your Father if you have received Christ. He is my Father because I have received Christ and have been brought into the family of God. What a privilege that is! Paul had been a Pharisee, and in Judaism he had never had the privilege of calling God his Father.

"Jesus Christ our Lord." Anything that is done in the local church needs to be done in the name of Christ and at His command. He is the Head of the church; He is the Lord. The Lord Jesus said, "You call Me Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I say; you don't obey Me." Could He say the same thing to many of us today? He warned that there are going to be many at the judgment who will say, "Lord, Lord, didn't we do this and that, and the other thing? We were as busy as termites for You!" And He will have to say to them, "I don't even know you. I didn't know you were doing that in My name, for you certainly didn't seek My will. You didn't seek to obey Me." We need not only to call Him Lord but also obey Him as Lord.

### **Warning Against Unsound Doctrine (1:3-10)**

We have said that this epistle deals with the creed and the conduct of the local church. Your creed must be right before your conduct can be right. It is almost an impossibility to think wrong and act right. One time a man complained to me: "When a woman driver puts her hand out the window at an intersection it means nothing but that the window is open! You never know what she is going to do, because sometimes she signals left and turns right, and sometimes she signals right and turns left!" It is sad that man often tries to act right even though his thinking is very wrong. It is impossible to keep that up for very long, my friend.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine [[1Tim. 1:3](#)].

"That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" -- in other words, that they teach no different doctrine. Paul wrote to the Galatians that there was no other

gospel. The Judaizers there were preaching another gospel, but Paul said there was none other. There is only one gospel, and there is only one doctrine.

"Doctrine" refers to the teaching of the church. What should be the teaching of the local church? It should be what it was from the very beginning. Following the Day of Pentecost it is recorded that "they continued in the apostles' doctrine." This was one of the four things which characterized that church: (1) The apostles' doctrine; (2) fellowship; (3) prayers; and (4) the breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper. These are the four "fingerprints" of the visible church. A church is not a true church of Christ if its doctrine is not the apostles' doctrine.

I recognize that our varying interpretations of the Scriptures lead us to disagree on some points of doctrine. I had lunch one time with a very fine, outstanding Pentecostal preacher here in Southern California. We talked over what we agreed on and what we disagreed on, and it was not as severe a difference as some might think. As we concluded he said to me, "Dr. McGee, we agree on so much, and we agree on what is basic; therefore we ought not to fall out on the things that actually are not essential things." I was glad he felt that way. I am sorry everybody doesn't believe like I do, but there are some who don't.

However, we must hold to the apostles' doctrine, the basic truths of the faith. The apostles taught the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the integrity and inerrancy of the Word of God. And they taught the deity of Christ. We will see in this very epistle that Paul had an exalted view of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are those who say he did not teach the deity of Christ. Well, of all things, that is one thing on which Paul is as clear as the noonday sun. He clearly taught the deity of Christ. Even here in this chapter when he says, "God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord," he places Christ right beside God, making it clear that He is God.

"I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus." Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus while he himself was in Macedonia. Ephesus was a very important city, and Paul had spent more time there than anywhere else and had his greatest ministry there. Timothy was to remind the Ephesians to teach no other doctrine. If the teaching of the church is not right, it is not a church. It does not matter how many deacons, elders, pastors, song leaders, choirs, or Sunday schools it might have. If the doctrine is not there, it is not a church. The doctrine must be that of the apostles.

Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do [[1Tim. 1:4](#)].

"Neither give heed to fables," or do not give heed to myths. Ephesus was the heartland of the mystery religions of that day. In that great center there was the temple to Hadrian, the temple to Trajan, and the great temple of Diana. All of that centered in Ephesus. These were all based on the mythology of the Greeks, and the Ephesian believers were to shun them.

Paul's reference to "fables" or myths could possibly mean the philosophy of Philo. Philo was an outstanding and brilliant Israelite who took the Old Testament and spiritualized it. In other words, he attempted to introduce the myth viewpoint. We have some of this

same teaching in our old-line denominational seminaries today. They teach, for example, that the Book of Genesis is a myth, that the stories there are myths and the men didn't actually live. There is such an accumulation of evidence to support the Book of Genesis from the recent findings of archaeology that the liberals seem to have backed down from this teaching somewhat.

"Endless genealogies." This could refer to the false teaching that the church is just a continuation of Judaism, that it is just one genealogy following another and not a matter of God dealing with man in different dispensations. Such teaching leads to great confusion as to the positions of Israel and the church in God's program.

Also the Greeks were teaching at that time what was known as the demiurge, and this teaching became a part of the first heresy within the church, which was Gnosticism. They taught that there were emanations from a divine center. The original created a being, and that being created another being below him, and he created another, and then another, and so on down the line. They wanted to fit Jesus in somewhere along that line as one of the created beings.

"Which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith." In other words, Paul tells Timothy that all these types of false teaching won't build you up in the faith. I think we can observe today in the liberal churches the fruit of their many years of unbelief. It has produced a hard core of almost heartless individuals who absolutely lack faith. They have rejected the Word of God, and the results we see in their churches are unbelievable.

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart,  
and of a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned [[1Tim. 1:5](#)].

"Charity [love] out of a pure heart." Paul again is using intimate expressions in writing to this young preacher that you will not find in his epistles to the churches. He tells Timothy that what is taught in the church should produce love out of a pure heart. A "pure heart" is in contrast to our old nature. It means a person who has been made righteous in Christ and can now manifest the fruit of the Spirit, which includes love.

There are three things that should be manifest in the church. The first is faith -- faith in God and in His Word. The second is love. Love is not something you simply mouth all the time. Love is an active concern for others, which means you won't gossip about them or in any way bring harm to them.

I know of one church that has done everything it can to wreck the ministry of its pastor. The one thing they aren't justified in saying is that he didn't teach the Word of God -- he did teach it. Yet they had accused him of not having taught it. And at the same time they talk about love. What hypocrisy! Love is not something you just talk about; it is something that must be made manifest.

Faith should be lived out in the life of a church, and love should be lived out. You do need an organization and church officers, but whether you have an episcopal or congregational or presbyterian form of government does not make much difference. If faith and love are lacking, you have nothing more than a lodge, a religious club of some sort. But if faith and love are manifest, the form of government is not too important.

The third thing that should be manifest in the life of a church is "a good conscience." I do not believe that conscience is a good guide even for a believer; yet a believer ought to have a good conscience. When you lie down at night, do you feel bad about something you've said or done during the day? Many sensitive Christians are like that. I had a call one time from a person who was weeping and said, "I said something about you that I should not have, and I hope you'll forgive me." I hadn't known anything about it, by the way, but apparently he hadn't been able to sleep that night because of it. It is good to have a sensitive conscience. Many have consciences that have been seared with a hot iron; that is, they are insensitive to right or wrong.

These three wonderful graces -- love, a good conscience, and faith -- are the things Paul says should be manifested by believers in a local church.

From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling [[1Tim. 1:6](#)].

"Vain jangling" means empty chatter, beautiful words, flowery language. There are people who will butter you up and pat you on the back, but it means nothing. It's all just talk.

Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm [[1Tim. 1:7](#)].

Paul is really laying it on the line. He makes it clear there are those who teach error, and they do it with assurance. They reject the Word of God and actually do not understand what they are talking about.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully [[1Tim. 1:8](#)].

In this section where Paul is warning believers against unsound doctrine, he has mentioned the mystery religions and the idolatry that abounded in Ephesus where young Timothy was. He has also warned against the false teaching that sought to make the Old Testament merely a mythology. Now Paul warns against legalists, those who taught that the law is a means of salvation and a means of sanctification after salvation.

The Law served a purpose, but God did not give it as a means of salvation. The Law condemns us; it reveals to man that he is a sinner in need of a Savior. Under the Law the best man in the world is absolutely condemned, but under the gospel the worst man can be justified if he will believe in Christ.

The sinner cannot be saved by good works for he is unable to perform any good works. Paul wrote in Romans, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" ([Rom. 8:8](#)). This idea that in and of yourself you can please God absolutely contradicts the Word of God. It is impossible to please Him -- you cannot meet His standard.

Good works cannot produce salvation, but salvation can produce good works. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works. Paul makes this very clear in [Ephesians 2:8-10](#) where we read: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

"We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." The Law reveals the will of God -- it is morally excellent. It is good for moral conduct but not for obtaining salvation. It cannot save a sinner, but it can correct him or reveal that he is a sinner. That is its purpose.

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine [[1Tim. 1:9-10](#)].

The Law was not given to the righteous man, the one who has been made righteous because of his faith in Christ. That man has been called to a much higher plane before God. The Law was given for the lawless. "Thou shalt not kill" is not given to the child of God who has no thought of murdering anyone, who does not want to hurt anyone but wants to help. That commandment was given to the man who is a murderer at heart. It is given to control the natural man. The Law is "for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons." Those who have come to Christ were not saved by the Law, but by the grace of God. They have been brought to a plane of living higher even than that given in the Law.

Let me give two illustrations of this that I trust will be helpful. Imagine a judge on a bench who has a lawbreaker brought before him. He is guilty, and he should pay a heavy fine and go to prison. However, the judge says, "I have a son who loves this prisoner although he has broken the law and I must condemn him. My son is a wealthy man and has agreed to pay his fine. He's also agreed to go to prison on behalf of this man. Therefore, his penalty has been fully paid. I am going to take this criminal into my home, and I am going to treat him as a son of mine." When the judge takes the criminal into his home, he no longer says things like, "Thou shalt not kill" or "Thou shalt not steal" ([Exod. 20:13, 15](#)). The man is now his son. The judge will talk to him about loving the other members of his family, how he is to conduct himself at the table, treat his wife with respect, and take part in the family chores. You see, this man is treated on an altogether different basis from what he was before. That is what God has done for the believing sinner. We are above and beyond the law. The law is for that fellow out yonder who is a lawbreaker. It is given to control the old nature, the flesh.

The other illustration is one that Dr. Harry Ironside told me years ago. After teaching at an Indian conference in Flagstaff, Arizona, Dr. Ironside took one of the Christian Indians with him to Oakland, California. Among other things, this Indian was asked to speak at a young people's group that was mixed up on the ideas of law and grace. They were confused about the place of the law in the Christian life. The Indian told the group, "I came here from Flagstaff on the train, and we stopped over for several hours in Barstow. There in the station's waiting room I noticed signs on the walls which said, 'Do Not Spit on the Floor.' That was the rule there. I looked down on the floor, and observed that

nobody had paid any attention to the law. But when we got here to Oakland I was invited to stay in a lovely Christian home. As I sat in the living room I looked around and noticed pretty pictures on the walls, but no signs which said 'Do Not Spit on the Floor.' I got down on my hands and knees and felt the rug and, you know, nobody had spit on the floor. In Barstow it was law, but in the home in which I'm staying it is grace."

Under law man never kept it, he couldn't measure up to it, and he broke it continually. Under grace a man is brought into the family of God, and he is not going to murder or lie. If he does, he is surely out of fellowship with God.

"Any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." Paul adds this in case he has left out something. It covers any and all sin he may have omitted in his list.

### **Personal Testimony Of Paul (1:11-17)**

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust [[1Tim. 1:11](#)].

Again this is one of those unique statements that Paul uses in writing to this young preacher which you will not find in his epistles to the churches. It might be translated: "According to the gospel of glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Isn't that a wonderful way to speak of it!

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry [[1Tim. 1:12](#)].

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord" -- Paul emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

"He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." The idea of ministry is greatly misunderstood in our day. All believers are in the ministry; not one of us is out of the ministry if he is a child of God. The word Paul uses here for ministry is the same as the word for deacon, and every believer is a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul even calls rulers ministers -- "ministers of God." We say that we have voted for a certain man or that the people put a man into his office, but I think that sometimes God overrules who is to be put into office. Rulers are supposed to function as ministers of God.

Paul is grateful to God that He has put him into His service as a missionary. Every believer has some service to perform for the Lord.

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief [[1Tim. 1:13](#)].

"Who was before a blasphemer" -- Paul uses this awful word and says that he was a blasphemer. He had blasphemed the Lord Jesus, and he had hated Him. I think he was present at the Crucifixion and ridiculed the Lord Jesus. Paul says that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and that he had injured the church.

"But I obtained mercy." When Paul speaks of his salvation he says he was saved by the grace of God. It was the mercy of God that put him into the ministry.



I have never really figured out why the Lord has used me in this ministry of giving out the Word of God. If you had said to me when I was a young, smart-alecky bank clerk that I was someday going to be in the ministry, I would have said it was absurd. I didn't want it, and I didn't have anything that would commend me to it. But God by His mercy, my friend, has put me into His service, His ministry. He is rich in mercy, and I have used quite a bit of it in my lifetime!

"Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." This was Paul's condition, and it was the condition of all of us before we came to Christ.

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus [[1Tim. 1:14](#)].

Paul was saved by the grace of God, who brought him to the place of faith and love "which is in Christ Jesus." Again, these are the things that will be manifest in the life of a believer.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief [[1Tim. 1:15](#)].

This is a very important verse of Scripture because it affirms that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He didn't come to be the greatest teacher the world has ever known, although He was that. He didn't come to set a moral example, but He did do that. He came into the world to save sinners.

When you give your testimony make sure that you don't tell people how wonderful you are or all you have accomplished. Tell them you were a sinner and that Christ saved you. That is what is important.

"Of whom I am chief." When Paul says he was the chiefest of sinners, he is not using hyperbole. He is not using high-flung oratory. He is speaking the truth. He was the chief of sinners; he blasphemed the Lord Jesus and shot out his lip at Him.

"But," Paul says, "I've been saved." The Lord Jesus came to save sinners, and if you say, "I don't think Christ can save me -- I'm the worst," you are wrong. Paul is the chief of sinners, and the chief of sinners has already been saved. So you will be able to be saved if you want to be. The decision rests with you. All you need do is turn to Christ, and He'll do the rest. He is faithful -- Paul says, "This is a faithful saying."

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting [[1Tim. 1:16](#)].

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy" -- you see, he needed mercy in order to become a minister, to be a missionary.

"That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Paul said that he was not only a preacher of, but also an example of, the gospel.



Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,  
be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen [[1Tim. 1:17](#)].

Paul simply couldn't go any further without sounding out this tremendous doxology. Who is "the King eternal"? He is the Lord Jesus Christ. And who is the Lord Jesus? He is "the only wise God." Don't tell me that Paul did not teach that the Lord Jesus was God. Paul considered Him to be God manifest in the flesh, and here he gives this wonderful testimony to that.

### **Charge To Timothy (1:18-20)**

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the  
prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest  
war a good warfare [[1Tim. 1:18](#)].

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy." Although his letter to Timothy is very practical and has to do with the local church and Timothy's responsibilities in it, it also reveals something of the wonderful personal relationship that must have existed between the apostle Paul and Timothy. This is Paul's personal charge to Timothy as a young man in the ministry.

"Son Timothy" -- he was Paul's spiritual son; Paul had led him to Christ.

"According to the prophecies which went before on thee." Paul had real spiritual discernment, and evidently God had directed him to take this young man along with him and allow him to have the position which he held in the early church.

"That thou by them mightest war a good warfare." You ought never to fight a war unless your heart is in it, unless you are fighting for a real cause and intend to get the victory. As a Christian, Timothy had a real enemy. He was involved in a spiritual warfare. Paul wanted him to fight a good fight and not to make shipwreck of the faith -- as others were doing.

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away  
concerning faith have made shipwreck [[1Tim. 1:19](#)].

Living the Christian life is not as simple as some would like us to believe. It is more complex than walking when the light is green and not walking when the light turns red. We have intricate personalities, and Paul is saying there is real danger for us in our human inconsistencies and failures. I assume you are not living in some ivory tower somewhere. Some Christians feel they are, that they are above the landscape and the smog and are way up yonder. But for those of us today who are walking on the sidewalks of our cities and rubbing shoulders with rough humanity and the problems of the world, we find that there are inconsistencies and failures. The danger we face is that of accommodating our faith to our failure.

A man I knew came home from the mission field and got a job doing something rather ordinary. He said, "The Lord led me to do this." He had trained about nine years to be a missionary, and now he said the Lord had led him back home to take a job that just wasn't very important. I asked him if he really felt that that was the way the Lord leads, and he insisted it was. He repeats this so frequently that I am afraid what actually happened was

that he accommodated his faith to his human failure on the mission field. That is a grave danger for all of us. My friend, when you and I fail -- when there is inconsistency in our lives -- we ought to go to Him and tell Him that we have fallen short, that we haven't measured up. As we will read shortly in 1 Timothy, the Lord Jesus is a wonderful mediator between God and man. We need not be afraid to go to Him.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme [[1Tim. 1:20](#)].

"Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander" -- Paul cites two examples of apostates in his day. He mentions them elsewhere in Scripture, and he doesn't have much good to say about either one of them. In 2 Timothy he writes, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil . . ." ([2Tim. 4:14](#)).

"Whom I have delivered unto Satan." These men had failed, they were apostates, and Paul exercised a ministry which I feel only an apostle can exercise. He says, "I have delivered [them] unto Satan." This is not something we could put under the name of ecclesiastical discipline or excommunication today. It is Paul exercising what was his prerogative and position as an apostle; he hands over these men to Satan.

We have another occasion of this mentioned in 1 Corinthians where Paul writes: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" ([1Cor. 5:3-5](#)). This is an authority the apostles had which we do not have today. We have no right to deliver any man over to Satan, but the apostles did. Peter exercised it also: I imagine that if we could talk to Ananias and Sapphira they would be able to tell us something of his authority as an apostle (see [Acts 5:1-11](#)).

## Chapter 2

**THEME:** Public prayer and woman's place in the churches

### **Public Prayer (2:1-7)**

Public prayer is prayer for the public and for public officials.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty [[1Tim. 2:1-2](#)].

Paul says that Christians are to pray for public officials, and I take it that he meant that the prayers were to be made in the church. To bring this up-to-date, he is saying the Democrats ought to pray for the Republicans, and the Republicans ought to pray for the Democrats. Many years ago a famous chaplain of the Senate was asked by a visitor, "Do you pray for the senators?" He replied, "No, I look at the senators, and then I pray for the country!" That is exactly what Paul says we need to do. We need to pray for our country,

and we need to pray for those who have authority over us. If you are a Republican and a Democrat is in office, pray for him. If you are a Democrat and a Republican is in office, pray for him.

"For kings." Paul says we are to pray for the kings who rule. You may ask, "Yes, but are we to pray when the government is a corrupt one?" Paul is saying we are to pray even if it's a corrupt government. We are to pray for whoever is in power. Remember that the man who was in power in Rome when Paul wrote was bloody Nero, yet he says we are to pray for kings, whoever they are.

"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Any government is better than no government. Some people may question that, but an evil, corrupt government, if it really governs, is better than anarchy. I agree with those who argue that politics is crooked -- man has certainly corrupted and misused political power - - but there does remain a semblance of law and order. Civil government is a gift from God, and we ought to give thanks for it and pray for it. Many of us fall short of praying for our government in order that we might continue to live quietly and peaceably.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth [[1Tim. 2:3-4](#)].

A second reason we should pray for government is in order that the gospel might continue to go out to the lost. I believe that we are actually going to see the persecution of Christians in this country in the future. I do not mean the persecution of church members -- the liberal church is so compromised today that they will go along with whatever comes along. I am saying that genuine believers in Christ may encounter persecution. Paul was beginning to experience persecution himself, and he said the believers were to pray for the leaders who were responsible for it. It was "good and acceptable in the sight of God" to pray for these men. Why? Because it is God's will that all men might be saved.

It is not important for you and me to get a certain man elected to office. I have never in my ministry recommended a candidate for office. I am not called to do that, and I don't believe any minister is. I am to pray for our leaders regardless of who they are in order that the gospel can go out. I want a man in office who is going to make it possible for the Word of God to continue to be given to the lost. This should be our concern and our prayer.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus [[1Tim. 2:5](#)].

"For there is one God." The Romans worshiped many gods, and today people worship many gods in a different sort of way. People are giving themselves to many things -- some to pleasure, some to entertainment, and so on. The entertainment world, for example, has become a religion of sorts for many people. There are women who would sacrifice their virtue in a moment and men who would sacrifice their honor in order to become a movie or television star. People have many different gods today. But there is only one God, and He is the Creator.

"And one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." In Old Testament times the Israelite went to the temple where there were many priests. He could go to God through them. Paul is saying that now there is only one Mediator to whom we are to go. We are not to go to any human being down here; it is not necessary to go through a minister. There is a Mediator between God and man.

We need a mediator, we need a priest, and we have one, the Great High Priest. Job's heart cry even in his day was, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" ([Job 9:33](#)). In effect, Job was crying out, "Oh, if there were somebody who could take hold of God's hand and then take hold of my hand and bring us together that there might be communication and understanding between us!"

Well, my friend, today we have a Mediator -- the Lord Jesus Christ has come. He has one hand in the hand of Deity because He is God. He is able to save to the uttermost because He is God, and He has paid the price for our salvation. He is a Mediator because He has also become man. He can hold my hand; He understands me. He understands you; you can go to Him, and He is not going to be upset with you. He will not lose His temper or strike you or hurt you in any way. You may say, "Well, I've failed. I've done such-and-such, and I've come short of the glory of God." My friend, He knows that, and He still loves you and wants to put His arm around you.

Isaiah wrote to the Lord: "In all their affliction he was afflicted . . ." ([Isa. 63:9](#)). Some scholars say that this should read, "In all their affliction he was not afflicted." Either way you read it, it is wonderful. I think maybe God wants us to see it both ways, but I like it, "In all their affliction he was not afflicted." God went through the wilderness with the children of Israel. When they failed and disobeyed at Kadesh-barnea, He didn't say, "Well, good-bye -- I'm through with you, you've failed." No, He went with them for forty years. But He also went on ahead: He gave Moses their instructions for living for the time when they would enter the Promised Land. But He waited for them and dealt patiently with them in their time of affliction in the wilderness. He wasn't afflicted; He didn't break down and fail, but just stayed there with them.

He has dealt with me in the same way, and it is wonderful to have such a Mediator through whom we can go to God. And you should go through Him, because there is really no use coming and telling me your troubles. I may not be sympathetic with you; I might not really understand your case. He does. He's human. He is a daysman, a Mediator. He has put His hand in mine. I don't put my hand in His; He puts His hand in mine. That is the wonder of it all! He has come down and put His hand in mine and taken hold of me, but He also holds on to God because He is God, and He has brought us together.

This Mediator is the One the world needs to know because there is but one way to salvation. Peter said to the religious leaders of his day: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)). Christ is the only way, but the tremendous thing is that He will bring you right through to God if you will turn to Him.

One time while in Canada I was told that I needed to get onto a certain freeway to get to Detroit, Michigan, but if I missed that freeway I was in real trouble. It took a great deal of manipulating around, but once I managed to find that freeway it brought me right into Detroit. I was thankful for the man who had said, "There is only one way." I am also thankful that I have been told there is one way to God, one Mediator. He is the only One who can bring us together: He can bring us to God because He is God and He is also a man, "the man Christ Jesus."

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time  
[1Tim. 2:6].

"Ransom" is antilutron in the Greek, and it means a "redemption price." Christ paid a price for our redemption. We needed to be redeemed -- you and I were lost sinners, and He was the ransom.

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the  
truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and  
verity [1Tim. 2:7].

"I am ordained" might be better translated "I am appointed." Paul says that he was appointed a preacher and an apostle.

"Preacher" comes from the Greek word kerux, which means "a herald or a trumpet," referring to one who gives out the gospel. He has been appointed one to declare the gospel.

"(I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;)." It might seem strange to you that Paul would say this to a young preacher who is his personal friend. I think he is saying it to encourage him -- Timothy knows it is true.

"A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity [truth]." Again this is something that he did not write to the churches. He has always said that he is an apostle of the Gentiles; here he says that he is not only the apostle to give the gospel, but he is also the one to teach the Gentiles.

## **How Men Are To Pray (2:8)**

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands,  
without wrath and doubting [1Tim. 2:8].

"I will" -- Paul is not making this a matter of his will, but is saying, "I desire."

"That men pray every where" -- that is, in every place where believers meet. Paul is talking about public prayer, prayer in the public service.

"Lifting up holy hands." This was a custom practiced in the early church. It revealed the dedication in the lives of those praying.

Now there are those who lift up their hands in services today, and they are sometimes criticized for it. There is nothing wrong with lifting up your hands if it is something you feel you want to do. Personally, I have always hesitated to do it because I'm not too sure about my hands, whether they are clean or not, clean physically or otherwise. Notice that

Paul says, "holy hands." This would mean that they are hands dedicated to God's service. My friend, you ought not to poke up your hands in a meeting if those hands are not used for the service of Christ.

"Without wrath" -- all sins have been confessed. You don't come in prayer with anger in your heart, or a bitter spirit, but with all your sins confessed.

"Without . . . doubting." In [Hebrews 11:6](#) we read: "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." When we come to God in prayer, we are to come in faith. One of the reasons I feel that our prayer meetings are not better attended today is that people lack faith. They do not believe that God is going to hear and answer prayer.

I do not mean to be irreverent, but I sometimes think that the Lord must yawn during our prayer meetings because they are so boring. Prayer should be made in our public services by those who have their sins confessed, who come without bitterness in their hearts, and who come in faith, believing that God will hear and answer. It is this kind of prayer that will make a prayer meeting what it ought to be.

### **How Women Are To Pray (2:9-15)**

Paul has given the way that men ought to pray, and now he will say how women are to pray. This passage will also touch on the matter of women's dress and their place in the local church.

We live in a day when there are two extreme positions relative to the place women should occupy in the local and visible church. Both positions use this passage of Scripture to support their stand.

One position permits women to occupy a place of prominence and leadership in all public services. They have women preachers, choir directors, and officers. No position is withheld from them and, as a result, the women are not only prominent but we find that they become dominant in the church.

When I was a pastor in Nashville, Tennessee, a tent was put up across the street from my church. The Baptist preacher in town was a good friend of mine and together we went over to meet the husband and wife team who were going to hold meetings. The wife did the preaching, and the husband did all the leg work. We watched him putting up the tent and setting out the benches and all that sort of thing. He also led the singing. That's all right if you like it that way, but I don't. However, the Baptist preacher and I gave the meetings all the support we could, because they had good meetings and she did preach the gospel. This is an example of the fact that God has used some of these groups who have women preachers in a definite way; but I think, frankly, that He has used them in spite of, not because of, the position of women among them.

The other extreme position on this issue is taken by those who do not allow women any place at all in their public services. You never hear the voice of a woman in public in their meetings, not even in singing. I have had opportunity for good ministry among some of these folk, but believe me, they push their women to the background. I fear that they

lose a great deal of talent and that the women could make a marvelous contribution if they were permitted to do so.

To illustrate this, allow me to tell you a story, and I hope you understand that I do so in a facetious manner. There is a little town in the Midwest where there lived a very prominent maiden lady. Everyone agreed that she would have made some man a wonderful wife, but she had never been asked and she died an old maid. The society editor for the local newspaper who normally would cover such a story was out of town, and the sports editor was asked to write up a little notice of this lady's death. He concluded the article with these words:

Here lie the bones of Nancy Jones:  
For her, life held no terrors.  
She lived an old maid, she died an old maid:  
No hits, no runs, no errors.

Churches miss something when they will not use the talent of their women. God can and will use them in His work.

The confusion that exists about this rather practical issue has been brought about by a misunderstanding of this passage of Scripture and also by an unfamiliarity with the Roman world of Paul's day.

Let's establish first that God has used women. In the Word of God we see Deborah, Queen Esther, Ruth, and others. In church history, we find women like Mary Fletcher and Priscilla Gurney. There are multitudes of others whom God has used in a wonderful way.

However, in the Roman world the female principle was a part of all the heathen religions, and women occupied a prominent place. The worship of Aphrodite at Corinth was probably one of the most immoral in which prostitution was actually made into a religion. The thousand vestal virgins who were in the temple of Aphrodite on top of the Acropolis there in Corinth were nothing in the world but prostitutes. They were characterized by very disheveled hair. The reason God said that a woman should have her head covered was so she would not be associated at all with religions like this. Also, in Ephesus where Timothy was at this time, women occupied a very prominent position in the worship at the temple of Diana. In all the mystery religions there were priestesses. It is because of these heathen practices that Paul is emphasizing in this passage that this matter of sex is not to enter into the public prayer in the services of the Christian churches. We need to approach this passage with these factors in mind.

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works [[1Tim. 2:9-10](#)].

"In like manner also" -- Paul has said how men are to pray in public, and now he will say how women are to pray. Note that he is saying women are to pray. That is not the issue, but he is telling them the way in which they are to pray in public. His emphasis will be upon inner adornment rather than outward adornment. Women are to pray in public, but



they should not dress up from the viewpoint of appealing to God in a sexual or physical way.

I want to make it very clear that I feel that a woman should dress as nicely as she possibly can. There is nothing wrong with a woman dressing in a way that is appealing to her husband (or, if she is single, to a man). I have made this statement before, and one lady wrote me in reaction to it:

I never thought I'd see the day when I would feel a need to take you to task over anything. Usually I agree with you on everything that you say. But on Friday morning in your last study in Proverbs, I guess you hit a raw nerve. You were admonishing young men on choosing a wife, and you said, "First of all, make sure she's a Christian." I agree with that. Then you said, "And if possible, choose a pretty one." Really, Dr. McGee, do you think that's quite fair? After all, there are far more plain, ordinary-looking girls and women than really pretty ones, and pray tell, where would they be if men chose only pretty ones? I happen to be one of those plain, ordinary-looking women, and I'm so glad my husband didn't choose one of the pretty ones, or I'd have missed out on twenty-five years of happy married life. I'm not really angry with you. How could I be when you've taught me so much of the deep truths of God's Word? I just wanted you to know that I think you ought to say a little something for us women whom the Lord did not choose to bless with physical beauty.

I want to say something to that woman and to others: Have you ever stopped to realize that when your husband fell in love with you he thought you were beautiful? Yes, he did. I shall never forget the night that I met my wife. It was a summer night in Texas, and we were invited to the home of mutual friends for dinner. Frankly, these friends were trying to bring us together. I didn't want to go because I had an engagement in Fort Worth that night. My wife didn't want to go because she was going with another fellow! But that night when I saw her -- I never shall forget her dark hair, her brown eyes -- there in the candlelight I looked at her, and I fell in love with her. I proposed to her on our second date, and the reason I didn't propose on that first date was that I didn't want her to think I was in a hurry! She'd never won a beauty contest, but she was beautiful. How wonderful it was!

I have a notion your husband thought you were beautiful also, and there is nothing wrong in dressing in a way to be attractive to him. But when you go to God in prayer, you don't need that outward adornment. You need that inward adornment. When a woman is going to sing in church, to speak or to have any part in a church service, she ought to keep in mind that her appeal should in no way be on the basis of sex. She should seek to please God, and there is no way in which she can appeal to Him on the basis of sex at all. Such appeal characterized the pagan religions in the Roman world, and Paul is stressing that it should not be a part of the public services of the Christian churches.

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence [[1Tim. 2:11-12](#)].

These verses have to do with the learning and teaching of doctrine. Keep in mind that the women led in the mystery religions of Paul's day, and they were sex orgies. Paul is cautioning women not to sepak publicly with the idea of making an appeal on the basis of sex. Paul strictly forbade women to speak in tongues in [1Corinthians 14:34](#).

For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety [[1Tim. 2:13-15](#)].

It was the sin of Eve that brought sin into the world. Now every time a woman bears a child, she brings a sinner into the world -- that is all she can bring into the world. But Mary brought the Lord Jesus, the Savior into the world. So how are women saved? By childbearing -- because Mary brought the Savior into the world. Don't ever say that woman brought sin into the world, unless you are prepared to add that woman also brought the Savior into the world. My friend, no man provided a Savior: a woman did. However, each individual woman is saved by faith, the same as each man is saved by faith. She is to grow in love and holiness just as a man is.

## Chapter 3

**THEME:** Officers in the churches

### Requirements Of Elders (3:1-7)

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work [[1Tim. 3:1](#)].

"This is a true saying" could be translated, "This is a faithful saying." In other words, this is a saying that stands the test of time; it is one you can depend upon.

"If a man desire the office of a bishop" means if a man seeks the office of a bishop. This has in it the thought that there will be the active seeking of the office. I believe that a man who has the qualifications ought to seek the office. He ought to want a place where he can use the gift that the Spirit of God has given him. If the Spirit of God has not given him the gift and is not leading him, then it would be a tragedy indeed if a man sought the office of bishop. This also suggests that there was not just one bishop in the church, but there were several.

"The office of a bishop." Bishop is a word that has been misinterpreted and interpreted differently by different groups. Those who practice the episcopal form of church government put great emphasis upon this word and its interpretation.

Bishop actually means "an overseer, a superintendent." In the early church the pastor was called by several different titles: (1) he was called a presbyter, or elder; (2) he was called a pastor, or shepherd; (3) he was called a bishop, or an overseer; and (4) he was called a minister. The pastor was never called "reverend," and I don't think any preacher should

be so called. Reverend means "terrible, that which incites terror." It is a name which applies only to God.

I take the position that the terms elder and bishop refer to the same person. Those who hold to the episcopal form of church government will, of course, disagree with me altogether. I believe that the use of "elder" (presbuteros in the Greek) refers to the person who holds the office, and it suggests that he must be a mature Christian. On the other hand, the use of "bishop" (episkopos in the Greek) refers to the office that is held. Therefore, these two words apply to the same individual or office.

A bishop in the early church never had authority over other bishops or elders. He did not have authority over churches. You do not find such a practice presented in the Word of God. Even Paul, who founded a number of churches, never spoke of himself as the bishop of a church, or as the one who was ruling a church in any way whatsoever. Therefore, the minister is one who is to serve the church, not rule over it.

"He desireth a good work" -- he is seeking a place where he can serve in the church.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife,  
vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach  
[\[1Tim. 3:2\]](#).

We have given here the positive requirements of an elder -- the things he ought to be.

"Blameless." The thing that must be understood is that you will be blamed for things if you hold an office, any office, in the church. What is important is that the accusation must not be true. An elder must be blameless in the sense that he will not be found guilty of anything of which he might be accused.

Shortly after I had been called to a pastorate in downtown Los Angeles, I met Dr. James McGinley in Chicago. He asked me, "How do you like being pastor in that great church?" "Well," I said, "it's a marvelous opportunity, but I find myself in a very unique place: I am accused of many things, and I can't defend myself. You cannot spend all your time answering everybody, so I've determined to just preach the Word of God and not try to answer them." Dr. McGinley said, "Just rejoice that the things you are accused of are not true." It is nice to be in that position, and that should be the position of a bishop -- blameless: accused, but not guilty.

"The husband of one wife." This can be interpreted two ways. It could mean that he ought to be married. I feel that Paul had this in mind. You may say, "Well, Paul was not married." I take the position that Paul had been married and his wife had died. He could not have been a member of the Sanhedrin without being married. He simply had not married again, perhaps because of his travels as an apostle.

When I first became a pastor I was not married and I was frequently kidded by a friend who said I had no right to be a pastor if I wasn't married. Using this verse, he would say, "You should be the husband of one wife." However, I think that the primary meaning here is that the bishop or elder should not have two wives. Polygamy was common in Paul's day, and bigamy was certainly prevalent. The officer in the church should be the husband of one wife.

"Vigilant" means temperate. The elder should be calm and not credulous. He should be a man who knows how to keep his cool.

"Sober" means sober-minded or serious. He means business. This does not mean an elder cannot have a sense of humor, but he should be serious about the office which he holds.

"Of good behaviour." An elder should be orderly in his conduct. He doesn't do questionable things. I knew a minister who got himself into a great deal of difficulty because of his careless actions. The rumors were that he had had an affair with a woman in his congregation. I'm confident from all the information that came to me from several sources that he was not guilty, but he certainly had been careless in his conduct. He was a young minister, and often at church social gatherings, he would kiddingly say that he was going to take another man's wife home. He would take her, leave her off at her door, and then go on to his home. All this was done with a great deal of kidding, but it caused some people to raise their eyebrows and start talking. My feeling is that the conduct of an officer or a minister should be absolutely above reproach. Kidding is fine, but it should not lead to questionable activity.

"Given to hospitality" means that an elder is to be a hospitable individual. He is the type of fellow who invites his preacher or others out to lunch. I've always liked fellows like that and have had the privilege in recent years of meeting many wonderful and hospitable laymen in my travels all over the country. One will come and put his arm around me and say, "Now can I help you in some way? Is there anything I can do?" They do things like having a bowl of fruit or a bouquet of flowers sent to my hotel room where I happen to be staying. One time in San Diego I broke off a capped tooth, and a doctor friend recommended a dentist there. That dentist is such a wonderful man I still go all the way to San Diego for my dental care. Such hospitable men can be found all across our country.

"Apt to teach." This is something I emphasize, because I do not feel any man ought to be an elder in a church unless he can teach the Word of God. I used to say to my church officers that I wished it was possible to give a theological exam to each one of them to determine if he was qualified to be an officer. I never actually did that, but I always thought it would be a good idea.

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous [[1Tim. 3:3](#)].

Now we come to the negative qualifications -- the things an elder should not be.

"Not given to wine" -- he should not be a drunkard.

"No striker" -- not violent or pugnacious.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre." He shouldn't have a love of money. The love of money is a root of all evil we are told in Scripture ([1Tim. 6:10](#)). The way a church officer handles his money can lead him into a great deal of trouble -- either his own money or the church's money.

"Patient" means reasonable. He should be a reasonable man, someone you can talk to or reason with.

"Not a brawler." He should not be a contentious person. Men who are constantly stirring up trouble in a church should never be selected as church officers.

"Not covetous" again refers to the love of money, but it also suggests idolatry, actually the worship of money. He should not be a man who puts the pursuit of wealth above everything else.

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity [[1Tim. 3:4](#)].

An elder should have the authority in his own home -- without being a dictator.

(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) [[1Tim. 3:5](#)].

A man does not know how to rule the house of God if he cannot rule his own home.

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil [[1Tim. 3:6](#)].

"Not a novice" means not a recent convert, not someone who has recently been saved. Sometimes a man is converted one week, and the next week he is made a church officer or asked to give his testimony. He is not ready for it. This is a caution that needs to be heeded today.

I had the privilege for several years of teaching a Bible study group of Christians in Hollywood. It was natural for them to want to push to the front some prominent personality who had recently made a decision for Christ. However, the cause of Christ is hurt when those who are young in the faith attempt to speak on matters of doctrine about which they are not knowledgeable.

"Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Pride was the Devil's great sin. Also it is often the sin of officers in the church and of preachers. It is a danger for all of us, but it is reprehensible when it is in the church.

Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil [[1Tim. 3:7](#)].

"Them which are without" means those who are outside the church. In other words, if a man has a bad reputation on the outside -- if he doesn't pay his bills, is untrustworthy, or is a liar -- he immediately is not a candidate to be an officer in the church. If he is such a man he is really a candidate of the Devil -- he would better represent the Devil than he would represent the cause of Christ.

### **Requirements Of Deacons (3:8-13)**

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre [[1Tim. 3:8](#)].

The word that is translated "deacon" here is the same word that is sometimes translated as "minister." Paul and Apollos are called deacons. The Lord Jesus is called a minister in [Matthew 20:28](#). In [Romans 13:4](#) government officials are called ministers, and in [2Corinthians 11:15](#) ministers of Satan have the word applied to them. Deacon or minister, therefore, is a general term for a servant or a worker.

We think of the account in [Acts 6](#) as giving the occasion when the office of deacon began in the early church. However, the Greek word for deacon is not even used there. But I'm confident we have scriptural grounds to say that those men were being appointed as deacons in the church.

A deacon, although he deals with the material matters of the church, should be a spiritual man. We have a problem today when we appoint a man as a deacon on the basis of physical rather than spiritual qualifications. We think that because a man is a successful businessman he will make a good deacon. There are too many men who are appointed to office on that basis.

I have attempted to emphasize in 1 Timothy that the local church is an organization that needs to make itself manifest in the community, and in doing so it gets right down where the rubber meets the road. It must deal with the problems of a building, supplying heat and light, and a lot of material issues that don't seem very romantic. However, the important matter is still that a church is to have a spiritual ministry in the community. We often put the material qualifications first, but the men who are in office must have the spiritual qualifications for their office. Someone has put it like this: "When a church ceases to be in touch with another world, she is no longer in touch with this one." I agree with that 100 percent. Until the spiritual aspects are emphasized, a church cannot accomplish the material and practical functions down here. The deacons, therefore, are to have certain spiritual qualifications.

"Grave" -- he should be a man of dignity.

"Not double-tongued." A deacon should not be two-faced. A man's word should amount to something. It can be dangerous when a man tries to please everybody or doesn't have the courage to stand on his own two feet. There is a fine balance between being a Mr. Milquetoast and being a dictator. An officer in the church needs to be somewhere between those two.

"Not given to much wine." I take this just as it is: the Bible teaches temperance, and that is important to see. I do not think the Bible teaches total abstinence because there weren't many medicines in those days and wine was used as medicine. In [1Timothy 5:23](#) Paul encourages Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach's sake. Even today many of the medicines we take contain a high percentage of alcohol.

The problem we encounter with alcohol in our day is the way it is used as a beverage, and I feel that the church should teach total abstinence because the abuse of alcohol is so prevalent. I do not believe that a Christian should use alcohol as a refreshment or a drink.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre." This means that a deacon should not have an insatiable love of money. He should be a man of integrity and should handle the money of the church in

an honest way. There is nothing that can hurt a church more than the accusation that the deacons are juggling the finances. Money given to a church for a specific cause needs to be carefully allotted to the intended cause.

I have discovered in my experience in the ministry that most of the churches I know are run by men of high integrity, but it is that small minority of dishonest men who are muddying the waters and causing difficulty. If there is one thing a church ought to be able to present to the world it is the fact that it is honest and holds a place of high integrity in financial matters.

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience [[1Tim. 3:9](#)].

"The mystery of the faith" means the revelation of the gospel of Christ. When Paul says "the faith" he is not speaking of the abstract quality of faith, but of the doctrines of the faith. He speaks of it as a "mystery" because these doctrines were not revealed in the Old Testament but are now revealed in the New Testament. We are told in Acts that the early church "continued in the apostles' doctrine." The apostles' doctrine was "the faith" of the early church. It should be the faith of the church today, and the church needs to represent that faith before the world.

There are a great many people who think the faith is outmoded and needs to be changed. An editorial in one of our national magazines a number of years ago supported this idea by suggesting an updated list of the "seven deadly sins." Their new list included selfishness, intolerance, indifference, cruelty, violence, and destructiveness. The list replaced lust, of course, with prudery. Lust was replaced, they said, because it had become as commonplace as the neighborhood newsstand or cinema. Gluttony was not included because it was considered a cholesterol problem but not a theological one. Words like covetousness and sloth were deemed antiquated. The article noted that different segments of society have different concepts of what constitutes sin. For example, young people would have placed irrelevance and hypocrisy high on their list of sins, but destructiveness would not have been included unless it meant only destructiveness of the environment. Similarly, elderly people would want noise, hair, and incivility included on their list. Some would argue that the new list simply contained old sins under new names. For example, selfishness had merely replaced covetousness. The article contended that the old names were obsolete and needed changing if sin was to retain any contemporary, moral force at all. It concluded by affirming that sin is a concept well worth saving!

I would emphatically agree that sin is a concept worth saving, but I must insist also that sin has in no way changed. What the Bible calls sin is still sin. Human nature is still human nature. The spiritual qualifications which the Bible lays down for church officers must still hold good today if the church is to represent the Lord Jesus Christ here on this earth. The church and its officers must hold to New Testament doctrine, calling sin the sins which are clearly labeled as such in the Word of God.

"In a pure conscience" -- not with the conscience that has been seared with a hot iron (see [1Tim. 4:2](#)).



And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless [[1Tim. 3:10](#)].

A man should not be shoved into office a month after he joins a church and before he has proved that he is the type of man that Scripture has described here.

Now Paul has a word about the wives of deacons. They must measure up to certain standards also.

Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things [[1Tim. 3:11](#)].

"Grave" -- they should be serious, able to be calm and cool.

"Not slanderers" means they are not to be gossips. A gossipy deacon's wife can cause much trouble in the church.

"Sober," again, is sober-minded.

"Faithful in all things." She should be faithful to her husband, to Christ Himself, and to His cause.

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well [[1Tim. 3:12](#)].

The deacons are to meet the same personal and family requirements that were given for the elders.

For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus [[1Tim. 3:13](#)].

"Good degree" could be read "good standing." In other words, a deacon who serves well will become known as a man who is to be trusted.

"Boldness" means confidence and courage in witnessing. Remember that a deacon primarily has a spiritual office. I remember the case of one man who was a deacon and was asked to take the office of an elder. Well, he didn't think he was spiritual enough or knew the Bible well enough to be an elder. If that was true, then he should not have been a deacon either, but he had been selected a deacon because he was a successful businessman. The spiritual requirements should be met by both elders and deacons before they are allowed to represent the church of Christ.

### **Report Of Paul To Timothy (3:14-16)**

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly [[1Tim. 3:14](#)].

Paul was in Macedonia, and Timothy was in Ephesus. Paul was hoping to be able to join Timothy shortly.

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth [[1Tim. 3:15](#)].

I have selected this as the key verse of this epistle because 1 Timothy is a book about church order. While he is away Paul writes, "I've written this to you so you will know how to act in the house of God."

"The church of the living God" -- Paul is speaking to the church that is the church.

"The pillar and ground of the truth." "Pillar" means the stay, the prop, or that which is foundational. What Paul is saying is that the church is the pillar, the bedrock -- it is the prop and support of the truth. If the officers do not represent the truth, the church has no foundation, no prop, and it cannot hold up the truth of God.

Some men purport to represent the truth, but they actually do not represent the truth in the way they lead their lives. I knew a deacon once who carried the biggest Bible I have ever seen. Every time you saw him he was weighed down on one side carrying that Bible. But he was a man you couldn't depend upon -- there was a question about his integrity. He hurt the church he served and brought it into disrepute. Paul is writing to tell the church how it should act so that it can represent and proclaim the truth of God to the world on the outside.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory [[1Tim. 3:16](#)].

This verse probably constitutes one of the earliest creeds of the church. Some think that it was one of the songs of the early church.

"Without controversy" -- means confessedly, or obviously.

"Great is the mystery of godliness." The mystery of godliness is that God in the person of Jesus Christ entered this world in which we live, paid the penalty of sin, and is making men and women godly -- that is, with Godlikeness.

"God was manifest in the flesh." Certainly Paul is teaching the virgin birth of Christ, but he is also speaking of Christ's existence before His incarnation. That existence was spiritual: He was "... in form of God ..." ([Phil. 2:6](#)). Hebrews speaks of Christ as "... being the brightness [effulgence] of his [God's] glory, and the express image of his person ..." ([Heb. 1:3](#)). The Lord Jesus Himself said, "God is a Spirit ..." ([John 4:24](#)).

Now from this condition as God -- not seen with human eyes -- Christ came into manifestation -- into sight -- in the flesh. He became a man and entered into human conditions. And under these human conditions the attributes of His essential spiritual personality were veiled. This is the thought John gives in his gospel: "... The Word was made [became] flesh." He was born flesh "and dwelt [pitched His tent here] among us ..." (see [John 1:14](#)). Just as God was not visible in the tabernacle in the wilderness, so Jesus Christ was veiled when He tabernacled among us in human flesh. He did not appear to men what He really was; man did not recognize who He was. The One who in the beginning was God, was with God, and who made all things, became a little, helpless baby. He was the image of the invisible God and had all power in heaven and in earth, but down here He took upon Himself human flesh. Because He was not recognized by

man, He was treated as an imposter, a usurper, and a blasphemer. He was hated, persecuted, and murdered. God manifest in the flesh was poor, was tempted and tried, and actually shed tears.

"Justified in the Spirit." Yet in all that, He was not justified in the flesh, but in the Spirit. He was manifest in the flesh -- that is how the world saw Him; but He was justified or vindicated in the Spirit in His resurrection. There were times when His glory broke out down here; there were revelations and expressions and witnesses of who He really was. There were angels at His virgin birth. His glory was seen at His baptism, at His transfiguration, and at the time of His arrest. The things that occurred at the time of His crucifixion caused the watching centurion to say, "Truly this was the Son of God" (see [Matt. 27:54](#)). But it was when He came back from the dead that we see Him now justified. He was manifest in the flesh, but justified in the Spirit: "sown a natural body; raised a spiritual body" (see [1Cor. 15:44](#)). No enemy laid a hand upon Him after He was raised from the dead. He will never be dishonored again.

However, because He came down here and has now returned to the right hand of God, we can be justified. Down here He was delivered up for our offenses -- He took our place as a sinner, and now He gives us His place up yonder and we are justified. How wonderful this is!

"Seen of angels" -- it doesn't say that He saw angels; rather, they saw Him. He has gone back to heaven, and now all the created intelligences of heaven worship Him because He wrought redemption for mankind. Little man down here hasn't caught on yet, but the song that will be sung throughout eternity is the song of redemption.

"Preached unto the Gentiles [the nations]" -- this is still happening today.

"Believed on in the world." Many today are trusting Him as their Savior.

"Received up into glory." Today Christ is at God's right hand. At this very moment, my friend, He is there. Have you talked to Him today? Have you told Him that you love Him, and have you thanked Him for all He has done? How wonderful He is!

## Chapter 4

**THEME:** Apostasy in the churches

### **How To Recognize The Apostates (4:1-5)**

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [[1Tim. 4:1](#)].

"Now" would be better translated "but." This would set in sharp contrast the early doctrinal creed given in the final verse of the preceding chapter and the apostasy within the church that Paul is now going to discuss.

"That in the latter times." Elsewhere in my writings on 1 Timothy I have said that this expression refers to the last days of the church on the earth, but I want to change my mind on that. I now feel that this refers to the days of the church beginning immediately

after the life of Paul. The apostasy of the church had begun even at that time. You remember that when Paul was in Ephesus he warned them that there would come wolves in sheep's clothing who would deceive the believers. John said, "Already there are many antichrists" -- already error had entered the church. The first great church was the Coptic church in Africa; it was way ahead of the others. North Africa produced some of the greatest saints in the early church, including Augustine, Tertullian, and Athanasius, but that church went off into heresy and departed from the faith.

When Paul says here, "in the latter times," he does not have the second coming of Christ in view at all. However, in [2Timothy 3:1](#) where he says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (*italics mine*), he is using a technical expression that always refers to the last days of the church on the earth before the Lord Jesus takes it out. The "latter times" mentioned here refers to our times today -- Paul was speaking of what lay just ahead for the church in his day.

"Some shall depart from the faith." Paul is warning that there will be heretical teachers who will mislead a great company of people. There will be a departure from the faith. Paul wrote also in [2Thessalonians 2](#) of the apostasy to come. Actually this matter of apostasy has been in the church a long time, and it will not be new at the end of the age by any means.

It has grown and will continue to grow, however. When the church of Christ is raptured, there will be left behind a totally apostate organized church.

"Depart" is *aphistemi* in the Greek and it means "to stand away from." A departure suggests not only that you have a point to which you are going, but also a point from which you have come. Those who apostatize are ones who have professed at one time to hold to the faith, but now they have departed from it. There cannot be an apostasy in paganism because they have never professed the faith. They never professed to trust Christ as Savior. They have never heard about Him, and there can be no apostasy among them. The apostasy comes within the organized church among those who profess to the faith and then depart from it.

"Giving heed to seducing spirits." Now when they depart from the faith, what is responsible for it? What has caused them to depart? Is it because they have become better educated, more intellectual? Is it because of scientific developments and increased knowledge which reveals that the faith can no longer be held? No, Paul says, "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits."

"Seducing" actually means wandering, roving, and it comes from the word vagabond or deceiver or seducer. In fact, Satan is all those things. They shall give heed to satanic spirits.

"Doctrines of devils [demons]." People will give heed to doctrines of demons. It is alarming to a great many people that even in our very materialistic age there is a return to the things of the spirit world and a great emphasis upon it.

Christians are told to ". . . try the spirits whether they are of God . . .," because there have gone out into the world these seducing spirits ([1John 4:1](#)). The test that we should apply

is the creed that was given in [1Timothy 3:16](#). ". . . God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit. . . ." The only way of salvation is through the death of Christ, and it is by this truth we can test the doctrines of demons today.

There is a small segment of those who claim to be believers who are placing a great emphasis on demonism. They are very interested in this subject and are reading everything they can find about it. I think that we are seeing a real manifestation of the spirit world today, but the best thing you and I can do regarding the Devil is to show him a clean pair of heels. We should not be a bunch of heels, sticking around and getting ourselves involved in all of this. Paul warns us against being seduced by the doctrines of demons. We should stay clear of them, testing each spirit by its acknowledgment of the deity of Christ and by its acknowledgment that God was manifest in the flesh and that we are justified through the redemption He wrought for us on the Cross.

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron [[1Tim. 4:2](#)].

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy." The apostate will pretend to be very pious and very religious. I have come to be suspicious of this pious position taken by super-duper saints who claim to have something special. My friend, if you do have the truth it will make you humble, because the first thing you will find out is how little you know. I realize that I have much more to learn about the Bible. There are those today, however, who know very little about the Word of God, but they speak as if they were authorities. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy," they pretend to be something they are not.

"Having their conscience seared with a hot iron." In [1Timothy 1:5](#) we read that the things which should characterize the visible church are faith, love, and a good conscience. We should be tenderhearted people.

There is far too much talk about sex in the church today. I have heard of things happening in some churches that make my hair curl. Things are being said and done which I do not think could be done unless your conscience has been seared with a hot iron and you have gotten away from the Word of God. It is important in the plan and purpose of God that the church have a tender conscience and not stoop to such low levels.

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth [[1Tim. 4:3](#)].

Even in Christ's day there were folk who went off from Judaism into cults and "isms." This is not something new in our day; it has been going on for a long time.

"Forbidding to marry." In Christ's day there was a group down by the Dead Sea known as the Essenes. It was from among them that the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. When Christianity came along, many probably joined the Palestinian church and helped to produce most of its characteristic heresies, including the regulation of not marrying.

"Commanding to abstain from meats." There are those who make certain rules and regulations about diet that are not in the Word of God. They go off on this as if food

could commend them to God. It is true that if you eat the wrong kind of food you will get a tummy ache, but it has nothing to do with your spiritual life, my friend.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer [[1Tim. 4:4-5](#)].

The Word of God does not condemn food; it commends it. If you can return thanks for the food, that sanctifies it for your body. "If it be received with thanksgiving" -- there are some foods I cannot be thankful for. There are certain foods that would really put me down physically if I ate them, and I cannot be thankful for them. Also, I am told that there is a place in San Antonio, Texas, that cans rattlesnake meat! It is a delicacy, they say. Well, if you served me rattlesnake meat for dinner and asked me to return thanks for it, I'm not sure that I could. But if you can receive it with thanksgiving, my friend, then go ahead and eat it, whatever it might be -- it's perfectly all right.

### **What The "good Minister" Can Do In Times Of Apostasy (4:6-16)**

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained [[1Tim. 4:6](#)].

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things." Paul has warned Timothy of the apostasy and false teachings that were to come into the church. There will be men who profess to the faith and then come to the place where they deny it. In turn, Timothy is to warn the believers about these things.

"Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ." Every believer is a minister, but here Paul has in mind Timothy as a teacher of the Word of God. That is a gift that some men have and some don't. But all believers are ministers.

"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" -- this is how the believer is to grow in the Word of God. We are not to go off on tangents about diet or some other aesthetic program as if it would commend us to God. Instead our diet is to be "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine."

"Whereunto thou hast attained." Some interpreters think that there was a danger in Ephesus in the midst of so much false religion and work of Satan that Timothy would go off into it all, but Paul said that Timothy had attained unto the things he has mentioned and commends him for it.

Paul has warned Timothy about apostasy and false teachings, but he will mention more things that Timothy should avoid:

But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness [[1Tim. 4:7](#)].

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables." As a young boy I remember there were a lot of sayings that the older people would quote to us children. I remember one dear Christian woman who had some peculiar ideas. One was that everybody should take

sulphur and tartar mixed with a little honey or molasses. I was fed that because my mother listened to her. I took enough sulphur and tartar to make a small mountain! I have no idea whether it did me any good or not, but she thought it was the only thing I needed as a boy. Similarly, when it was discovered that I had cancer I was given over a hundred books on diet to help rid me of the cancer. I couldn't have followed one of these books without contradicting another! One said to eat plenty of grapes, the other said not to eat grapes. One would say to take honey, another to keep away from it. I decided to listen to the Great Physician and to leave my case in His hands.

"And exercise thyself rather unto godliness" -- Timothy is to practice godliness in his life. Too many people emphasize the don'ts more than they do the exercise of godliness.

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come [[1Tim. 4:8](#)].

"For bodily exercise profiteth little." There are those who believe that Paul is downgrading physical exercise. I don't understand it that way at all. Paul spent about three years in Ephesus where there was a great coliseum in which the Olympic Games were held at times. The coliseum seated 100,000 people, and foot races were often held there. Paul uses the figure of the race and compares it to the Christian life and walk in [1Corinthians 9:24-27](#). I believe Paul knew something about exercise. I stood in the city of Sardis one time and observed the Roman road that was being excavated to the east and the west of that city. Paul walked that road nineteen hundred years ago, preaching the gospel of Christ. He didn't travel in a bus or in an automobile. He didn't ride a horse or even a donkey. Paul walked there, and it took a rugged individual to cover the ground that he covered throughout the Roman Empire. He may not have done much jogging, but he did a great deal of walking.

Paul's emphasis on godliness rather than on physical exercise is because the Ephesians were a people given over to games and athletics. We are also that kind of a nation. Many of our cities have coliseums where great spectacles are conducted, and many believers put more emphasis on athletics than they do on the things of God. There are church officers who spend more time during the summer in the ball park than they spend in prayer meetings. Paul is not saying bodily exercise is wrong. He is saying, "Let's hold things in correct perspective."

"But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Bodily exercise will help you only in this life, because when you get a new body it won't make any difference whether you've exercised this one or not. "But godliness is profitable unto all things." Those who argue that a Christian can fall into sin and can always come back to God on easy terms are right. But, my friend, a godly life pays off not only down here, it will pay off in eternity. The Prodigal Son lost a great deal by going to the far country, and any Christian who lives a careless life rather than a godly life will find that even in eternity he will pay for it. Are you as anxious about godliness as you are about physical exercise, about athletic events? The physical ends at the end of this life, but godliness is carried over into the next.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance [[1Tim. 4:9](#)].



Paul is emphasizing the point he has just made. In other words, he says, "Here's something you can count on." You could count on it in the first century in Ephesus, and you can count on it in Los Angeles in the twentieth century. And we can count on it in the twenty-first century, if we make it that far.

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe [[1Tim. 4:10](#)].

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach." If you stand for Jesus Christ today it will cost you something. There is no question about that.

"Who is the Saviour of all men." We hear a great deal of discussion about what color of eyes Christ had. Was He blond or brunette? How tall was He? I talked to one man who was disturbed to see a picture of Christ painted as a black man. "Why not?" I said, "He's the Savior of all men." The color of His skin or of His hair is not the important thing. Scripture never gives us that kind of information about Him. Even the FBI doesn't know. What Scripture does say is that He is the Savior of all men. Whoever you are, He's your Savior and He's the only Savior.

"Specially of those that believe." He is the Savior of all men, but you can turn Him down if you want to. Let me illustrate this for you. They say that a plane leaves the Los Angeles International Airport every minute, and I could get on any one of them (if I had the courage!). All I need to do is get a ticket and get on the plane. It's a plane for everybody, you see, but not everybody will take it. Christ is the Savior of all men, but only those who believe will be saved (see [John 3:16](#); [1John 2:2](#)).

These things command and teach.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity [[1Tim. 4:11-12](#)].

"Let no man despise thy youth." Paul knew that there would be those in the church who would say of Timothy, "Well, he's just a young fellow -- he doesn't know yet." Maybe there were some things he didn't know, but he was not to let anyone despise his youth.

"But be thou an example of the believers." How could Timothy keep people from despising his youth? By not acting like a young fool. When I began as a young minister, even before I was ordained, I told an old, retired minister that I felt a little embarrassed and even frightened when someone with gray hair would come into the church to hear this young preacher who was still a student. He advised me, "Don't ever worry about that. Don't let anyone despise your youth, but make dead sure you are an example of the believers." The important thing is not your age, but whether you are an example.

Paul tells Timothy in what ways he is to be an example: "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." There is nothing new about the "new morality" today, but believe me, the morality of the Bible is brand new to some folk! This is God's standard -- six ways in which we should be an example.

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine [[1Tim. 4:13](#)].

The minister is to read the Scripture publicly. For what purpose? To comfort and to teach. The Word of God needs to be read, and until the church is getting people into the Word of God, it is missing its main function.

This was applicable to Timothy personally also. The minister can grow personally only by reading the Word for his exhortation and instruction. A growing minister will make a growing church. One of the greatest things ever said concerning Dwight L. Moody was said by a neighbor: "Every time Mr. Moody comes home, you can just tell how much he's grown spiritually." Are you further along spiritually today than you were this time last year? Are you growing in grace and the knowledge of Christ? The only way to do so is by reading the great truths of the Word of God.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery [[1Tim. 4:14](#)].

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee." The Spirit of God gives to every believer a gift, and Timothy had a gift that he was to use.

"Which was given thee by prophecy" -- evidently Paul had predicted what this young man would do.

"With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" -- the laying on of the hands of the officers of the church. The laying on of hands never communicates anything, my friend. There are those who believe that something will be transferred to the person by the laying on of hands, but the only thing that will be transferred is disease germs -- that's all! Laying on of hands indicates partnership in the ministry. I always insisted that my church officers lay their hands on every missionary we commissioned. Every minister who is ordained should have hands put on him by those who are partners with him. That is what it means, and it is quite meaningful.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all [[1Tim. 4:15](#)].

"Meditate upon these things" -- be diligent in your study. There is no excuse for a minister not to study the Word of God, and there is no excuse for any Christian not to study the Word of God.

"Give thyself wholly to them." I will not accept a daily devotional time as a substitute for reading and studying the Word of God. It will not work to open your Bible to read a chapter at night when you have one eye closed and both feet already in bed. Nor will it work in the morning when you are half awake, or at the breakfast table when you are about to take off for work. My friend, you couldn't study geometry, higher mathematics, or science like that. The Word of God is worthy of all that you and I can give to it, and we can never give as much as it should have.

"That thy profiting may appear to all." The greatest compliment you could give your preacher would be to be able to say, "You are really improving in your preaching." That's the best thing you could say.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee [[1Tim. 4:16](#)].

May I say this kindly, but I must say it: God have mercy on the minister who is not giving out the Word of God! That is a frightful sin. It would be better to be a gangster than to be a man who is supposed to give out the Word of God and fails to do so.

## Chapter 5

**THEME:** Duties of officers in the churches

Both chapters 5 and 6 will deal with this very practical matter of the duties of officers in the church. This gets right down to the nitty-gritty of church life today. There is nothing romantic in this, but it is very realistic and meaningful for us.

### **Relationship Of Ministers To Different Groups In The Local Church (5:1-25)**

Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren [[1Tim. 5:1](#)].

"An elder" -- the first relationship discussed is Timothy's relationship to elders. There has been some difference of opinion as to whether Paul is referring to the office of elder or to an elder person, someone who was older than Timothy. In the early church the "elder" was an office, but the word used here refers to the individual. I think Paul had both aspects in mind: he is speaking of a mature child of God, and a man who occupied a certain office. Paul means both for the simple fact that an elder was an elder -- an older man.

"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat [exhort] him as a father." Timothy was not to rebuke an elder publicly, but he was to entreat him privately. Timothy was a young man, and he needed to be very tactful in his relationship with these older men in the church. In other words, he was not to take the position of a know-it-all or of a dictator over these older men. He was to encourage them and have a word privately with them if he thought it was necessary.

"And the younger men as brethren." A sweet relationship should exist between Timothy and the older men and also with those of his own age.

The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity [[1Tim. 5:2](#)].

"With all purity." A minister of a church should be very careful in his relationships with the opposite sex. Nothing hurts a church more or has more frequently wrecked the ministry of a church than sin in this area. When a minister must leave a church because of such a problem, the spiritual deadness in the church is very noticeable. Nothing can

destroy the spiritual life of a church more than this kind of an experience. The "new morality" cannot and will not work in the church.

Paul has discussed Timothy's relationship with the men in the church -- older and younger, and then the women -- older and younger. He comes now to his relationship with a third group --

Honour widows that are widows indeed [[1Tim. 5:3](#)].

"Honour" is a very interesting word, and in the Greek it is the same word from which we get our English word honorarium. It has in it the thought of value being attached to something. Sometimes when I speak at a church on a Sunday or for a week of special services I receive a check that says on it, "Honorarium." In other words, they have attached value to what I have done.

The early church took care of their widows, and they were very careful about it. The care of widows was the problem that arose in [Acts 6](#). The Greeks (who were Jews from outside of Israel) felt that their widows were being neglected in favor of the others. The apostles had men appointed to handle the care of the widows so that they themselves could continue to concentrate on the preaching of the Word. Paul is giving instruction here as to how the care of the widows is to be carried out.

"Honour widows that are widows indeed." The instruction given in the Word of God is very practical. It uses a whole lot of common sense and is not moved by sentimentality. Christians are known to be tenderhearted, and there are a lot of people today who have their hands out to us. We need to be very careful. The early church took care of widows, but they didn't do it in some haphazard, sentimental way. The deacons were to make an investigation to see who were truly widows, where the need was, and how much need there was.

There are not many liberal or even conservative churches who are taking care of the widows in their midst. This is a much neglected area today.

Paul is going to go into this in very specific detail:

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God [[1Tim. 5:4](#)].

"Nephews" here are grandchildren. The investigation should determine whether the widow in question has children. Why aren't they supporting her? Does she have grandchildren? They have a responsibility toward her. This was God's method, and I think it still is God's method.

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications, and prayers night and day [[1Tim. 5:5](#)].

Now this widow is "a widow indeed" -- a real widow. She is "desolate," that is, she is in need. She is a godly woman, and she prays. She not only prays for the church and the pastor, but she prays for herself and for her need. She has a right to do that. And I want to

say that God uses us to help answer such prayers. He makes it clear that when we find a widow like this we are to help her. It is quite lovely when we do things God's way.

But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth [[1Tim. 5:6](#)].

But if you go over to a widow's house and find that she is having a cocktail party, I would say that she is not the widow to help. It does not matter how prominent her son, or her sister, or her brother might be in the church, she is not to be helped.

And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless [[1Tim. 5:7](#)].

Paul is saying, "Timothy, you make this very clear to the church in order that they might act in an honorable way in these matters."

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel [[1Tim. 5:8](#)].

My friend, I don't know how I could make this any stronger than it's made right here: the widow is to be taken care of by her own flesh and blood. It does not matter what type of testimony a man may give at a businessmen's meeting, or what kind of a testimony a woman may give to the missionary society, if they are not taking care of their own, they have no testimony for God. They are worse than infidels. Scripture is very clear here -- you might miss some things in Scripture, but you cannot miss this.

Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man [[1Tim. 5:9](#)].

"Into the number" refers to the group of widows which were to be helped. Why did they have this age limit? Because if she was under that age she could still work and take care of herself.

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work [[1Tim. 5:10](#)].

"Well reported of for good works." Paul is saying that it is good to consider what kind of person the widow has been in the past. Check back in her life. Don't help everyone who comes along. But if she is the kind of person he has described and she is in need, you are to help her.

I wish that the church could get back to these very basic and simple principles and get away from the sentimental and emotional appeals that we hear instead. We respond to sentimental pleas from unworthy causes which are appealing to our soft hearts and neglect those in our very midst who have real need. We overlook the wonderful widow in our own church who is lonely and seldom visited. Her children have moved away or have died, and she may have physical need. Too often the church ignores such need. But if a church took care of its widows, its testimony would not go unnoticed by the world.

I believe that these widows who are helped by the church ought to be deaconesses in the church -- they should render some service to the church. For example, several years ago I called a widow in my church and asked her to visit a lady whose husband's funeral service I had just conducted. The death had left the lady without family or friends, and I asked the widow to visit her because she would understand the woman's need -- she had been through it herself. They became warm friends and grew in their relationship to God because of it. A widow can and should serve in some way in the church.

But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith [[1Tim. 5:11-12](#)].

The younger widow is likely to want to remarry -- and that's all right, as I see it. But notice that there is the danger of remarrying for the wrong reasons. There is the danger that she will forget all about her faith. The church is to be very careful and test the young widows also.

And withall they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not [[1Tim. 5:13](#)].

In other words, they carry garbage from one place to another, and the garbage is gossip. They go about, "speaking things which they ought not." There is the danger for the young widow, who has been relieved of the responsibility of being a wife and homemaker (perhaps having no children), that she will become a regular gadabout.

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully [[1Tim. 5:14](#)].

The woman is the homemaker.

In this whole section Paul is giving instructions about the behavior of men and women who are in the church. He is stressing that these relationships should be on the highest level as a testimony before the world -- that they "give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

For some are already turned aside after Satan [[1Tim. 5:15](#)].

They were not genuine believers, of course.

If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed [[1Tim. 5:16](#)].

Each family should support its own widows, so that the church can concentrate on the widows who are without family and are in real need.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine [[1Tim. 5:17](#)].

The early church paid their teachers, and a good teacher, I think, was paid a little bit more.

For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward [[1Tim. 5:18](#)].

Paul is quoting here from [Deuteronomy 25:4](#) and [Luke 10:7](#). I have known very few preachers who I thought were money-lovers; most men are in the ministry for a different motive than that. You are not going to hurt the preacher if you give him a generous offering. Be generous also to a visiting Bible teacher if his ministry is a blessing to you.

Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses [[1Tim. 5:19](#)].

If this procedure were observed it would cut down a great deal on the gossip and misunderstanding and the strife that goes on in our churches today. Paul says that the pastor and every member of the church should refuse to let anyone whisper into his ear any gossip about the pastor or a church officer. People should be able to prove their accusations before witnesses. The important thing is that you should have the facts before you talk. And if you have the facts, rather than scatter the scandal abroad, you should seek to correct the problem by going to the proper authorities. Any accusation should be given before more than one witness.

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear [[1Tim. 5:20](#)].

If the facts are known that a church leader has sinned, he is to be rebuked. The question arises, Is this to be done publicly? I believe that when a member of a church sins and it does not concern the congregation it should never be brought out into the open, nor should it be confessed publicly. However, when a leader of the church, an officer in the church, sins, and it has hurt the church, then I think it is time to call names. It may also be time to drop his name from the roll of membership. Great harm can be done to a church by sin in the life of its leaders, and this is the way Paul says it should be dealt with.

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality [[1Tim. 5:21](#)].

Timothy is to treat everyone in the church alike. There may be an officer in the church who is a wealthy man and who has been good to the pastor. Perhaps he has bought the pastor a suit of clothes or helped him buy a new car. A pastor will often brag that such a man is a member of his church, and he may not feel inclined to bring any charges against him even though it is evident the man is guilty. Paul says that we are not to show partiality in the church. James said the same thing in [James 2](#).

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure [[1Tim. 5:22](#)].

We read earlier that the officers were to be installed by the laying on of hands (see [1Tim. 4:14](#)). We saw that the laying on of hands indicates partnership in the ministry. The



thought here is that this is not to be done "suddenly," not to a neophyte, someone who has been recently converted.

If we exalt a young Christian to the position of a teacher before he is thoroughly grounded in the Word, the theology he teaches is apt to be weird theology. The church ought to be a place of instruction where the Word of God is taught and men and women are built up in the faith. Instead, today we often develop what I call Alka-Seltzer Christians and Alka-Seltzer churches -- it's all fizz, foam, and froth, a lot of emotion, and a lot of talk about love, love, love. It is important that love be displayed in a church, but it needs to be anchored in the Word of God. Our mistake is that we often interpret some sort of experience as being the test of spiritual maturity. We've got the cart before the horse. The Word of God is the test, and experience can prove the truth of it. We can be certain that an experience which contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible is not from God at all.

There were many young converts in the Ephesus area, and they needed teaching. It was a serious business for young Timothy to select the teachers and appoint them to teach the Word of God.

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." In other words, "Don't compromise, Timothy. Don't let someone talk you into letting a young convert teach. You will be a partner in sin if you do. Make sure the teachers are anchored in the Word of God."

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake  
and thine often infirmities [[1Tim. 5:23](#)].

I have to smile when I read this verse. It has certainly been abused in its many interpretations. Obviously the wine is not being used as a beverage but as a medicine.

Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment;  
and some men they follow after [[1Tim. 5:24](#)].

Sometimes God will judge a Christian's sins right here and now, but if He doesn't judge him immediately it does not mean that He is not going to judge. I have observed this over many years and have seen that eventually God will move in judgment.

Paul wrote about this to the Corinthians because there were some who were not commemorating the Lord's Supper in the proper manner. He said, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" ([1Cor. 11:30](#)). Paul said that some were already being judged by God. Some were actually sick; others had died as a judgment of God.

Paul went on in 1 Corinthians to say, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" ([1Cor. 11:31](#)). When a Christian sins, he can judge himself. That doesn't mean he is just to feel sorry for his sin. He is to deal with it: that is, if it has hurt somebody, he's to make it right; and he is to turn from that sin. If he doesn't do these things, he has not judged himself.

First Corinthians continues: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" ([1Cor. 11:32](#)). The world commits these

sins, and God judges. Neither is a Christian going to get by with them: either you will judge yourself, or God will judge you. If you judge yourself, the matter is settled. If not, He will judge. Sometimes that judgment will occur here and now. If not, it will be dealt with when you appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand;  
and they that are otherwise cannot be hid [[1Tim. 5:25](#)].

The same principle applies to good works. Sometimes God blesses a believer down here for something he's done for which God can reward him. Others are going to have to wait until they are in His presence to receive their reward, which will be the case of a great many Christians.

## Chapter 6

**THEME:** Duties of officers in the church (concluded)

### **Relationships Of Believers To Others (6:1-21)**

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them,  
because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because  
they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These  
things teach and exhort [[1Tim. 6:1-2](#)].

"Servants" -- Paul is going to deal with the relationship of capital and labor. The Christian should render a full day's work for whomever he is working. If he agrees to work until five o'clock, he should work until five o'clock. Then sometimes workers leave with their pickaxe hanging in the air -- they don't finish up. The Christian is to turn in a full day's work for a full day's pay.

Now suppose a Christian has a Christian boss. That puts their relationship on a different basis; it brings it to a level above any kind of contract. I know of a manufacturing plant in Dallas, Texas, where the owners are Christians and many seminary students are employed. I have had the privilege of speaking to them in a forty-five minute chapel service they have and for which time the workers are paid. The spirit is marvelous there, and one time I commended the management for it. They replied, "Don't commend us! We find that these Christian men are better workers than anybody else. It's a two-way street. They are such wonderful employees that we don't feel that we are giving them anything. They give so much to us." What a wonderful relationship!

You see, Christianity gets out into the workshop. It gets its hands greasy. It gets its feet down in the mud sometimes -- not the mud of sin, but the mud of hard work.

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words,  
even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which  
is according to godliness;

He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself [[1Tim. 6:3-5](#)].

There are some proud men in the ministry, and they do cause trouble. Pride will always cause trouble, and it is unbecoming in a child of God. We ought to recognize that we are sinners saved by the grace of God. Pride is a constant danger -- pride of place, pride of race, pride of face, and pride of grace. Some people are even proud that they've been saved by the grace of God! But, my friend, we Christians have plenty to be humble about. We have a very sorry and sordid background. We are sinners saved by the grace of God.

But godliness with contentment is great gain [[1Tim. 6:6](#)].

It is important that the child of God find satisfaction with his position in life.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out [[1Tim. 6:7](#)].

This is a true axiom. As one of our American millionaires was dying, his heirs waited outside his room. When the doctor and lawyer finally came out, they eagerly asked, "How much did he leave?" And the lawyer said, "He left everything. He didn't take anything with him." We come into the world empty-handed, and that is the way we leave it. This is the reason a child of God ought to be using his money for the work of God. I believe that making a will is fine, but it is often much abused. As someone has rhymed it,

Do your givin'  
While you're livin'.  
Then you're knowin'  
Where it's goin'.

A child of God should make sure that he is supporting the work of God in some way.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition [[1Tim. 6:8-9](#)].

Riches will not bring satisfaction.

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows [[1Tim. 6:10](#)].

Money is not evil in itself -- it is amoral. Notice it is the love of money that is a (rather than the) root of all evil.

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness [[1Tim. 6:11](#)].

These are the virtues that a man of God should pursue.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses [[1Tim. 6:12](#)].

"Fight the good fight of faith." This fight may be outward or inward, physical or spiritual.

"Lay hold on eternal life." Let me ask you a question: If you were arrested for being a Christian and were brought into court, would there be enough evidence to convict you? This is what Paul is talking about. "Lay hold on eternal life" -- make it clear by your life that you are a child of God.

I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ [[1Tim. 6:13-14](#)].

"God, who quickeneth all things" means God who gives life to all things.

"Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable" means to keep the commandments Paul had given him without stain and reproach. My friend, if you are following Christ, you will act like a child of God.

Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen [[1Tim. 6:15-16](#)].

"Who only hath immortality." Jesus Christ is the only One who has been raised from the dead in a glorified body.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life [[1Tim. 6:17-19](#)].

"Charge them that are rich." These verses are a warning to those who are rich.

"Ready to distribute" means ready to sympathize, ready to share.

"Lay hold on eternal life" means the life which is life indeed.

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen [[1Tim. 6:20-21](#)].

In other words, don't try to be an intellectual preacher or teacher or Christian.

"Science falsely so called" should be translated the falsely named knowledge. Paul is speaking of the Gnostic heresy, but this can certainly be applied to all human philosophies.

## Bibliography

(For Bibliography to 1 Timothy, see Bibliography at the end of 2 Timothy.)